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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
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COMMUNIST PROPOSALS FOR RENEWED KOREAN TALKS MAY FORESHADOW
SHIFT IN SOVIET TACTICS

There are some diplomatic and propaganda indications that the new Malenkov regime may be willing to pay the price of ceasing hostilities in Korea in order to obtain a conference on controversial Far Eastern questions. The Kremlin may also be attempting to pave the way for big power negotiations on outstanding East-West issues as a result of a desire of the new regime to pursue a more cautious foreign policy and reduce the possibility of new American pressures.

On 30 March the Senior Soviet UN Secretariat Member Kassaniev took the initiative to inform a Norwegian delegate that Chou En-lai's statement about nonforcible repatriation of POW's was the "real thing" and only "technicalities" remain. Kassaniev then sounded out the Norwegian with respect to a Malenkov-Eisenhower meeting and said that the Soviet Government understands that "the Americans may wish Churchill to attend and perhaps also the French." In reply to a question regarding the agenda, Kassaniev stated that Korea is "not the only hot spot in the world" and also suggested that bilateral talks, which were potentially of the greatest importance, might include control of atomic energy and disarmament.

The Norwegian delegate gained the impression that Kassaniev was speaking under instructions and that the Soviet delegation must have had prior information about the Chou En-lai communique.

There is as yet no evidence, however, that the Communists will meet UN conditions regarding the timing of a cease-fire, the definition of a neutral, or the final disposition of the prisoners unwilling to return. Accordingly the apparent concession in Chou En-lai's proposal could simply spring from Communist recognition that such a move was essential in order to obtain a resumption of the Panmunjom discussions and to regain the propaganda initiative.

State Department review completed

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It may also, however, be an indication that the Kremlin now believes that its cold war strategy would be better served by an effort to obtain a post-hostilities conference on such questions as the withdrawal of UN troops from Korea, the status of Formosa, and the recognition of Communist China. The Malenkov regime has already stepped up its diplomatic and propaganda attempts to split the United States from its allies and the neutral nations, and has even somewhat moderated its attacks on the US. An effort to obtain a political conference would also fit the Communist program for the Far East which has for some time shown a trend toward emphasis on political action.

The possibility cannot be excluded that the Viet Minh may develop a new tactical line advocating the "peaceful" reunification of Vietnam, although the evidence thus far is non-existent.

In any negotiations on Europe the USSR could appear conciliatory while maintaining the status quo and thus interfere with the implementation of the Western defense effort.

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